

Title: Interview with Bryant Owens

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Location: Crisfield Fire Department

Interviewer(s): John Golladay and Christopher Knorr

Interviewee: Bryant Owens

Introduction: Bryant Owens, a firefighter and former commercial pilot, shares his experiences of growing up as a Crisfield native, and how living in the City of Crisfield has changed since he was a child, and now as a father of two, and as an active member of the community.

[Transcription begins]

John Golladay (Golladay): All right, we're here on April the 10th, 2025. I'm John Golladay, an interviewer that we also have-

Christopher Knorr (Knorr): Christopher Knorr, also an interviewer.

Golladay: And then we are today here interviewing...

Bryant Owens (Owens): Bryant Owens.

Golladay: Thank you. Alright, so, just to start off, how long have you lived here in the Crisfield area?

Owens: Mostly my entire life. I moved away a couple of different times for, I moved away for a year when I graduated high school for college, just to Salisbury like you all. And then after college I moved to San Diego for about six to eight months, give or take. I was flying back a lot, back and forth. And other than that, I've been here. So it's, I'm 35, I'll be 35 this year, so let's say I've lived here for more than 33, 34 years.

Golladay: Why'd you- why'd you move away after you left the-

Owens: College. To grow, wanted to get away from my parents, to then run right back to them, if that makes any sense. So college was the first move to Salisbury. I was attending college up there and I was staying up there as well, renting an apartment and trying the whole spread your wings thing. When I moved to San Diego, it was to finish up my commercial pilot training. Friend of mine graduated the Naval Academy in 2012. He was stationed in San Diego, called me and said, "Hey I got this nice three-bedroom apartment that is literally you could walk to the

airport from my house where I know it will take you five minutes' walk," and I was like, "Five minutes there's no way." And I pulled up this was old school Google Maps and I was like, "He's not kidding, like I can walk there if I wanted to." So, went out there, toured the flight school, checked it all out, packed my bags and moved back out there. Stayed there for six months to finish up my commercial pilot training. And I moved back home and started flying.

Golladay: So, what was it like growing up here?

Owens: Amazing. It is- it is, my childhood. I was a 90s kid. So, I believe that the multi-faceted question, it's not just a single linear approach to it, right? So, what I'm getting at is you guys are a little bit younger than me, so you were born into the tech era. You were born with very advanced software and different things like that. When I was born, the most advanced video game was Mario. You get what I am saying? On the screen, going across, jumping out, going into the tubes, down Duck Hunter had just come out. So, my generation was taught to play outside as well, and I'm not saying that you all weren't, but do you understand tech? I have two young kids. Technology is very prevalent in their life, if you understand. Whereas I was told, "Hey, get outside, go- go use your imagination." So I was outside a lot, but I was also on the forefront of the technological advances. So, it, you know, you had a little bit of both, goodness, if you can understand what I'm saying. So, Crisfield in the 90s, was absolutely amazing. Safe, I mean, I started riding my bike around this town when I was nine years old, unsupervised. And it was supervised, I thought it was unsupervised, but everybody knew my mother. You see, it was a very small-knit community, so if I was doing something inappropriate or being mischievous, for lack of a better term, my mother would find out. So, you had that, a community raises a child, or it takes a village, is how they like to say it. So, very nice, you know, it's great, great childhood down here, can't, can't say enough about it, you, small town vibe, but we're still close enough to all the modern amenities.

Knorr: Would you say growing up and everything that maybe the environment and nature in this area being so close to the water kind of played a- a factor?

Owens: Absolutely 100%. 100%. They, well, in what regards are you asking though? Because there's so many multi-, you know, again, that's a multifaceted, because the wet, water, the bay is one of the biggest things that we have here. It is, you now, it's a driver for so many things, whether it's good or bad, whether its bad weather, flooding, like you guys are very interested in, or it could be good, because this town was built off of the seafood that came out of that bay so.

Knorr: In terms of just like recreational use or social use.

Owens: Great, it was awesome. Growing up on the water, I cannot express enough, also public schools, I attended public schools down here and they catered to it. We had a lot of field trips, a lot engaging into the environment. When I was in high school, we had what was called Fox's Island. I don't know if you've all heard of Fox's Island. It's about 10 miles southwest of Crisfield.

You can only get to it by boat. And it was a conservation area type. They had a house with bunks and everything like that, and high school groups could go there and stay and learn about the environment, get out there and see how the crabs live, shed some crabs, X amount of things. It was just an environmental trip. That's exactly the sole purpose of it. So again, that's something that was catered to us. It's right here in our backyard, something very easily accessible for us.

Knorr: So yeah, it was also like a big source of kind of entertainment for you.

Owens: Absolutely.

Knorr: Gotcha.

Owens: Absolutely. Fishing, going out on the boat, swimming at the beach, I mean I was- I was one of those kids that was on the water. Around here you get a skiff before you get a car. You can get your boaters license and you're good to go. And me and a lot of my friends did that.
[pauses]

Golladay: So what- what keeps you here in Crisfield today?

Owens: Family, and the community is good. You cannot find that sunset anywhere else on this Earth. I've been. I'm a pilot. I've seen multiple corners of it from, you know. And in America, you can't find a west-setting sunset across the water anywhere but the West Coast or here. You can go further up in the east end where you are from, Tilghman's Island, those areas, and you don't get it because the separation from the bay to the other side of the bay is only about 14 miles, whereas down here you've got 30. So, 30 miles with the curvature of the Earth, you lose the other side. So, it looks like the sun is setting on water, so it's absolutely gorgeous. I believe that the grass is green where you water it. The generations of mine. And this is not a diss, I don't want this to ever, you know, again, this is an interview with you and you're taking the information, but if it ever became public, I don't want people to think that I'm dissing them for following their dreams and going and chasing what they believe is the best route for their lives, so what am I getting at? Everybody left. Everybody that, all the top people in my school, right, so, I was in the National Honor Society in high school, correct? Let's say there was 10 others in my grade of 90 people that were in the National Honor Society, okay? How many of them do you think live in Crisfield? Work and pay taxes and try to flourish this environment?

Golladay: I'd imagine very few.

Owens: One. And then there's a nice woman that lives down that way that was in it with me, and she still lives here. Everybody else is gone. My Naval Academy buddy, he's in Japan right now. He's wherever the Navy sends him. He's following his dreams. He's doing what he wants. I'm not, again, I'm not. Mine was when I started growing up, I saw that my town was slowly starting to fail. And I figured that if we don't start interjecting some good youth into this and trying to

solve issues, that it's going to wither away to nothing. The tide will eventually take it one way or the other because there's not going to be enough people here to inhabit the structures and then they'll just fall in. So the grass is greener where you water it. So if you don't invest, and I'm not trying to brag about myself or anything like that, but if you put decent young talent into an area, how can you expect it to ever flourish? If all of your talent leaves at the time when they're building, they're going to build the areas that they live in, not here. You see where I'm getting at? So, I have a buddy who's a doctor. He doesn't live here. You know what I mean? He lives in Baltimore and drives to Baltimore to go work in Berlin. Stays with his parents when he wants to not drive back and forth to Baltimore when he's got a shift in Berlin, his parents down here, so that's a great, you see where I'm getting at? He pays taxes in Baltimore City and he's flourishing their economy with his good paycheck, you see where I'm, that's- that's kind of it, that's our whole thing, that's why I stay.

Knorr: Yeah, I'm- I'm from the Baltimore area actually, and Baltimore City is where I was born and raised and everything and you kind of see that influx of youth of like what you're saying going into the area.

Owens: And I'm not dissing it. If you can understand. I understand, their reasoning is there, and everybody has their reasoning, whether it's the infrastructure that the city provides, the hospitals, job opportunities, etcetera, it's there. I agree with what you're saying, but if you continuously feeding into that, this is never going to get anything ever better. So it's the place that raised you, that raised your grandparents, the grandparents, your ancestors before that, and we're just going to let it fail because it's hard. Because there's not any type of kind of commerce or things like that here.

Knorr: Right, yeah, so, but with that, yeah. You would argue maybe just as important as it is with some of like, the rising tides and the environmental side of it, but the youth injection and the and maybe the business injection-

Owens: Course.

Knorr: And everything is probably just as crucial to-

Owens: Absolutely

Knorr: -to the area.

Owens: Absolutely. It's a changing tide, to say the least, to put in a lack of better, but yeah.

Golladay: So what are some- some of your most cherished memories of growing up and living in Crisfield?

Owens: Whoa, man, you're riding my bike around town, meeting up with friends and riding bikes. I don't know if you've seen Gordon's back in, you know, the 90s, you could have three dollars in your pocket and get lunch. You know what I mean? Like you get a fry and a small drink and they fix you something, you know what I mean, you go in there and it's like, what other small community does that? You go in and you go, "I got three dollars, can I get something to eat?" "Yeah, what do you want?" and it's just, it's different. Going on the boat is one of my best memories of my entire life, period. Whether it was being youthful or being a full-grown man right now. Being on the water is my passion, it's where I love to be. So yeah, when I was a kid, it was tubing and water skiing and just anything. Climbing a beacon and jumping off the top of it. Now, I just enjoy a nice, cold adult beverage and watching the sunset. You know, not having noise if you had a quiet that is associated without there you can't find that quiet in my world until you get out there, phones always going, someone's always calling, fire whistles going off, something is happening. So, yeah, great memories. I don't think I could give you one, to be honest. If I had to say one, it's the water. It's being on the water, associated with that, whether it was fishing, crabbing, water, you know. All those good water activities. I mean, now that you're older, you look back at like other, like getting stung by a jellyfish when you were a kid. Horrible. Now that I think about it, I was like, man, it was funny. Like, you know, like, I was water tubing and late in the summer jellyfish come in thicker. As the water warms up, you start to see more jellyfish. And we were tubing, and my friend's dad told us, "Y'all shouldn't tube today. Jellyfish are everywhere." "What, I'm not worried about them." He dumped us. We had a wave, flew off. When I came up, the jellyfish was sitting on top of my head. Tentacles going right down the side of my face. That was painful. But now that I think about it, man, that's experience. That's life. That's growing. Ask me if I go tubing during jellyfish season anymore. You tube in the beginning of summer and then you're done, that's it.

Golladay: So do, what kind of community events are there around here that you attend?

Owens: Well, you have the major, we have two, well three really major events that happen this summer. The first happens on Memorial Day weekend. It's the Soft-Shell Festival, it's kind of intertwining with the first year of the Tangier Sound Music Festival. They're hosting a country singer, Jimmy Allen, I don't know if you've heard of him, but he's coming down doing a concert, and they got a couple other entertainers that are singing there. So, Memorial Day weekend, the Soft-Shell Festival, that's usually the kickoff of summer. Then you have the Freedom Fest which happens in July 4th. That's usually a very good turnout. We have the Crab Derby at the end of the summer and Labor Day weekend. That is a huge, as a child growing up, now my children, you know, it's a big icon to the community. And then the second one next to Crab Derby would be the J. Millard Tawes Crab and Clam Bake. Just a great event. Great times. And then, the other one would be The Heritage Festival. We have a Heritage Festival that takes place down at the J. Millard Tawes building down here. It's a great, great event and a new one that has started is a Bluegrass event. I'm not really a Bluegrass fan, but that event has started to come around and it is garnering, whether you want to believe it or not, there is a- a very niche group of people who

love Bluegrass and they will drive to listen to live Bluegrass. It was- it was incredible to see the turnout.

Knorr: Do you- do you participate, I mean obviously outside of firefighting and everything, do you participate in a lot of these local events or-

Owens: Yes.

Knorr: At what input?

Owens: I am. I'm a community man through and through. I am the Vice President of the Lions Club. I'm the President of Crisfield Fire Department. I'm Chairman of the Crisfield Airport Commission. I'm member of the Economic Development Committee for Crisfield. Yeah. I'm involved, I'm a member of the Hightide Club, which is hosting the Soft- Shell Festival music festival. The Freedom Fest is the only one that I don't have any skin in the game really. We- we set up a firetruck, we do the July 4th fireworks, things like that, so I do coordinate a little bit of that, but I'm kind of hands off that one to enjoy July 4th because every other weekend I have something going on for someone else. Yeah.

Knorr: So you said you're on the economic development and everything?

Owens: It- we haven't met in about three years. It's kind of dwindled away to nothing.

Knorr: I was going to say, what is your opinion on kind of the local economy, you know, like the fishing, the crabbing?

Owens: It is taking a hit. It's taking a major hit. So our big economy isn't per se fish here, it's crabs, and oysters are a big one. Legislation, and again, I don't know the studies, but I live here and I fish here and see what comes out of this bay, if you understand what I'm saying. The number one destroyer of the blue crab population is not humans anymore. It is rockfish. Go cut open an 18-inch rockfish, the smallest legal-size rockfish you can catch, and look inside his belly and see what's in there. It's not legal-size crabs sitting inside there, it's all the illegal ones. So what we would have to throw back if we harvested them. He's eating them, and he's not, I don't know if you've ever seen videos of these animals on the bottom. It is like a suction cup when they decide, when they find a pocket of small crabs to eat, and they just suck them up. And then three hours later, they're on to the next one, and they will just devour them. Rockfish are on the up here, especially baby rockfish. And that's what I see the most is the limits that are imposed on the commercial watermen from the legislation that comes down from Annapolis, from people who are not out in this world every day. Fishing, pulling up the crabs, going to work. They read a study, they read a research paper that's done by one group of people that fished one specific area. They're not, my father-in-law fishes that Tangier Sound every day of his life. Go ask him what the number one enemy is to a crab. That's a rockfish. Ask him what's the number enemy is for,

or, the number protected thing per the states. Rockfish. I mean, get caught illegally harvesting rockfish and see how big of a lawsuit you're about to be in if you don't go to jail for a very, very long time. And it's a balance, if you understand. And the state does, and I'm not, this isn't a diss of the legislation of the state, they do what they believe is right, if understand what I'm saying. So everybody's got skin in the game, they're doing what they think is right. It's just sometimes there's a disconnect between the two, if you understand what I'm saying. And that's the biggest thing that I see with them.

Knorr: Do you think if maybe there can be a little bit more connect between kind of the upper government and what's going on down here that maybe there could be more business growth, youth infusion-

Owens: No.

Knorr: -a little bit?

Owens: No, I think it's a dying battle. I really do. The honesty. That's honesty. The, it's not- it's not a diss towards the upper government. It's a diss towards the industry and the crabs and things like that. But it is becoming, let's just- let's just put it in this aspect. If they ever put OSHA standards on crabbing, no one would be able to afford to eat crabs, if you understand what I'm saying. So it would become even rarer. So it's very hard for these men to make a living as it is, and then the regulations that come down put even more of a hamper on it. A buddy of mine, he's crabbed for the last five years. He's giving it up. He's selling everything he's got. He just can't do it. He's got a CDL now. I mean he's had a CDL, but he tried crabbing, he's done. He's selling every piece of equipment, he's got selling his licenses, he can't put food on the table for his family. And whatever the reason may be, the upper government is doing what they believe is best for the environment for future generations so that in a hundred years they're still catching rockfish in that bay. I understand that. Do you see where I'm getting at? It's just there's some type of disconnect. I don't and I don't know the answer. That's not my area. I want to be the- a big saying that I have is you don't kick down the door unless you can rebuild it and right now, I'm kicking down the door without giving any solution to rebuild it, so that's the thing. But there's definitely a disconnect between the two, and I believe that if there was better communication, but you're talking about two different worlds trying to communicate, and that's the thing. There needs to be a middle person that can siphon that raw material that the watermen are going to give you to put it into proper lingo to then shuffle it up to Annapolis and then vice versa take proper procedure, government literature, different things like that, code of federal regulations, blah blah blah, dumb it down, send it to the watermen. This isn't a lack of intelligence on them, they're very smart, it's just their intelligence is in navigating the seas, understanding the movements of crabs, how to rig up pots, weld, basic electrical work, basic plumbing work, you're all these things as a waterman. So, you're not, it's not that you're not intelligent, you just haven't studied books, you haven't how to properly write a grant, different things like that so, do you see where

I'm getting at with that disconnect, you need that middle person who can talk to them and portray that message correctly up there and then the same thing here and I think that's the only way you get that better, but again I think we're too far behind the curve and I think that your Asian markets have already circled up and then the Gulf of America is, it's a big industry as well now. They have really figured out how to get oysters and crabs out of that area. It's moving down there, so again, you have more markets now whereas 50 years ago we were the main market. Nobody else is doing it now it's growing now they commercialized it into other areas of the world in the country which creates more influx so, no, I believe here it's very- it's a very losing battle. And it's- I would say that it's not that the government is sitting up here and they hold the high ground, I think they're both sitting on the low ground, they just don't know it yet. And it's the other commercial entities, the other states, the other countries that have this, they're the ones on the high ground. Does that make sense?

Golladay: So, you've talked a bit about the economy, but like weather and like flooding-wise, have you noticed any changes over the years in Crisfield in terms of intensity or frequency?

Owens: Yes. Absolutely, I don't remember it flooding as much when I was a child. Now we get a good rain we're flooded. We have acquired two surplus army vehicles for our fire department. I don't know if you've seen our fire department. You came and you see those two big army trucks sitting up there. Do you know what those are for? We're not going to battle, so what could a fire department use those for? To transport human beings out of floodplain zones to safety. During Hurricane Sandy, we found a need. So the fire department, this and this is another issue. This is a good one to talk about as well. We are in the process of trying to build a new fire department. Trying to find the funding and different things like that. Why do we need a new fire department? We have a nice big brick building right down there, right? It's in the floodplain. So if it floods, okay? And I'm not saying we're not going into the flood, but if we can't respond to the equipment to then go into the flood, who does that help at all? I'm not taking my personal vehicle that I pay X amount of dollars for into known flood waters when I don't live in the floodplain. You see where I'm getting at? I want to help you in the time of your emergency, but I can't destroy my vehicle with no, you see what I'm saying, without being repaid for it. So the whole idea is we moved the firehouse and the equipment out of the floodplain. We can respond to the high ground and then we can go into the low ground to start rescuing people out. Hurricane Sandy, that was our issue. We had to pick a crew and they just had to stay at the firehouse. They didn't leave. Besides going out to grab bodies and pick up people and get them out to the higher ground. That was it. And the water was so bad directly across our fire department. There's a sign over there and he's an assistant chief now. His name's Assistant Chief Jay Paro. Jay's about five foot eight, and he got out to there and I thought he was going to go under water. That's how deep it was, about four foot of water, four and a half, five feet of water. It was up to his shoulders. And so again, that's, yes. So now, what does that mean for now? Now we get a good rain, it floods. You get a good rain with a high tide already, they're closing schools because the school busses can't get the kids home safely. Because you've lost sight of the roads, because the roads and the

ditches will look as one, you know, it just looks like [inaudible] the whole way down the back roads. You can't tell, granted we've all lived here, we drove the same roads for X amount of years. We kind of have an idea of where the road's supposed to be, but do you want to risk that with your children? And a \$150,000 bus or two, I don't even know, there are probably more now if you understand what I'm saying, but think about the bus drivers, they buy their busses themselves, they're not provided by the county. So they have to think about that as they go into these floodplains. Who's going to reimburse me for the tide damage that this is going to do? Or Lord forbid, I run into a ditch and hurt somebody. You know, so it's definitely changed. I mean it's absolutely changed. We see it more. Summer's here. You're going to see it consistently now with the rain season coming I mean, and then falls are worse. Falls are absolutely worse for flooding. You get that harvest moon, where it pulls the tides up a little bit more. You get two inches of rain, Crisfield's flooded for a day and a half. And again, I believe that's a multifaceted thing. It's not just a linear, it's not just global warming, it's not just erosion, it's- it's all in, all in one. It's all coming together creating the perfect equation, if you understand what I'm saying. Would these issues affect a town that is 20 feet above the floodplain? No. They wouldn't care. We're not. We're level. We're right level with it. So it's very drastic to us. Erosion. Erosion is one of the biggest things around here is how much the sea takes back. And as it takes it back, where does that sediment go? You understand what I'm saying? So that's the hard thing to explain. People say here, they're like, "Well, if sea level rise is real, why is my boat still hitting the exact same spots on low tide?" Because sea level rises doesn't change the bottom of the ground. It just changes it on high tide when the water has nowhere else to run. And again, back to the, you know, the disconnect between explaining climate change, sea level rise, erosion, and all of that, Crisfield has ditches. We have ditches everywhere. Those ditches have not been dug out properly. And even if they were dug out properly, where would the water flow when the basin is flooded up to a foot above the tidal plain? Do you see where I'm getting at? So how do you pump the water out if it has nowhere to go? What, are you going to pump it into the bay and the bay is already higher than the ground? It's not going to work. So, but trying to have that conversation with certain people, your- you either don't believe in climate change because you believe in erosion and different things like that, or you believe in climate change and you don't believe in erosion because you're one of these, do you see where I'm getting at? There needs to be a middle. There's a middle with this issue. Not, it's not a linear thing, it's a multi-faceted equation for what's, especially with Crisfield. Other areas of the country I can't speak on, or even the tidal basin of Chesapeake Bay, Crisfield's just unique in its low line. I mean, from the fire department down, we're standing on oyster shells right now. This ground was built on oyster shells. They were pulling so many oyster shells out of the sea in the late 1800s, they didn't know what to do with them. They were harvesting so many. So they just started extending the land out. So this was all marshland, rough-looking marshland. Just little bits of wetlands. And they just starting compacting oysters onto it to make roads, to make places for people to live. I mean, so again, that's unique, how many other towns that you know that are built on oyster shells? So, which, again, it's gonna help, it's not going to help with your floodplain at all. So.

Knorr: Outside of, obviously, you've spoken on Hurricane Sandy and kind of the effect that it had here, are there any other flooding or storming events that you kind of vividly remember that were, you know, I know you're saying that the frequency is-

Owens: That's the thing. That if you have. If you break your arm once, you really remember it. You break it 20 times, they start to get in it. God forbid if anybody ever broke their arm 20 times. Lord bless you. But you see where I'm, that's a horrible analogy, but you just see where they're getting at. They string together. You're like, yeah, "I remember. I remember that one. Was that seven? Or ten? But I remember, I know I broke it. I knew, I knew I broke it, you know. I remember it flooding!" That's kind of, Sandy was a catastrophic event so it sticks out and then you get six, seven flooding events a year, they all start stringing together, if you understand what I'm saying. We get a good Nor'easter, we'll flood. I mean, especially, in the fall, a fall Nor'easter is just as bad as a hurricane to us. If it just goes and parks off the coast of Delaware right over there, and just that counterclockwise rotation, it starts whipping that water up into the bay. So we have nowhere for the water to drain. The tide stays up. You get the big harvest moon as it is at night time. You're just creating that perfect equation for us to get floodwaters. Flood for three or four days straight. And a low tide would just be, I can drive down the far-left lane and make it to the fire department, but I better turn around. So it's there.

Golladay: So as, so, as far as Hurricane Sandy goes, what was your experience during Hurricane Sandy like? What were you doing at that time?

Owens: I was still in college, so I was home. I was at my house. My mother had just moved in with my stepfather, so I had just taken over the house by myself, "I can tough this out, this is nothing," and then about six, seven o'clock, my stepdad calls me and he said, "I'm gonna come get you before it gets dark," he said, "because it's getting bad." He said, "I'd like you to be on higher ground." They live in Marion. So, I went up there. So, my experience with Hurricane Sandy was full electric, steak in my belly. I had to tend some chickens, you know. So that was- that was about it for me. Now, the next morning. That was, that's when it all really started hitting, because it came down, I had some trees blown over at my yard, my grandparents had some tree blown over, and Crisfield was basically shut down. There was no existence of life in Crisfield. You couldn't drive past McDonald's. The flood water was so high up there, all the side roads off of the strip were completely flooded. I wish I had pictures of it, but this is, it's been a long time. I don't even think I had the iCloud then. But it was, it was extensive. It was very- I've never seen anything like it and this building was flooded. Flooded out, up to, say the trim, baseboard trim. So most buildings down here, my aunt's a little different. As you can see, she doesn't, but if you have another serious hurricane coming, you raise everything up like a refrigerator is already up a foot in the air in there. It sits on center blocks foot in air so you don't have to worry about raising that when it comes. None of the computers sit on the ground in here. They're all sitting on top of a desk. So if something happened, you couldn't get down here to raise it up, you're already

prepared. That's something you have to think about here. You can't- you can't put your stuff on the ground, you got to pick it up.

Knorr: Yeah, I mean to that point, would you say that you've had to change kind of your like you spoke your kids going to school and everything but your daily life is kind of the subtle little changes like you're saying raising everything up and being prepared for exactly different stuff is you got affected?

Owens: This building here, like I told you, that floods very bad. We have a shed in the back here, sandbags. We have about 30 sandbags in there. Why, to barricade that front door for the next flood, we're already ready. That means just, you know, gotta be prepared. Yeah, I mean, the sand is really the only deterrent that you can have for the floodwaters. And again, it doesn't always help. If it goes above the sandbags, it's not helping you at all. But if we can pack the sand in front of that doorway, and it will, the water, if it doesn't go over the top of the sand, the sands will keep it out. It will keep out. You'll see a little bit of a crevice. You'll some droplets get through, but nothing to damage anything, if you understand what I'm saying. Take the sandbags away, you'd have an inch of water sitting there in that front lobby, if not more, all according to how much it can push through that door. Yeah.

Golladay: What have you noticed, like, other people around doing to prepare themselves for, like flooding events?

Owens: The same exact thing. I think everybody's got sandbags now, everybody, and if they don't the city whatever we know and the city is good about this, they try to make it easily accessible to come and get sand and sandbags. They even provide the bags to try and help the community, but most people that I know now just already keep a little bit on hand if you're in the floodplain, especially these businesses down here.

Knorr: Are there any like kind of spoke on with the city government everything and you spoke a little bit on the ditches maybe that was more concerned, but are there projects that excite or also that concern you that are going on around here? I know it's kind of a- that's a tricky question with-

Owens: The one that excites me the most is our current mayor has, our current mayor is awesome. Ms. Taylor, she- she's a- she's a Crisfield woman, if you understand what I'm saying. She loves community, she loves Crisfield, she wants it to flourish. So to speak on that, where I'm going with this, she, all administrations are giving the past dealings of the administrations before them, if you understand what I'm saying. So even though they didn't create the problem, they have to deal with the problem, if that makes any sense. And I'm not saying the administration before her created the problem or the administration before them or so on and so forth. Somewhere this problem started, okay? And it's our water. Our city water pipes are 100 plus years old, alright? That should have been a project that was being undertaken 60 years ago. Do

you see where I'm getting at? They should have be replacing spot after spot after spot after spot. Do you see where I am going with this? Instead, we're all here right now. If something major happens, they are scrambling trying to figure it out. So instead of having a calculated plan in place to slowly phase out the 100-year-old pipes throughout a 60-year period to get to 2025, previous. Again, I'm not trying to diss people, this is just facts, okay? The previous generations before us didn't, wasn't a problem, they didn't think about it, they don't care, if you understand what I'm saying. So now, my generation is facing a water problem in Crisfield, a sewage problem in Crisfield, okay? Those are the most prevalent issues that this, any community in this world could ever face. Water is the number one thing for any community. I don't care where you go, period point blank. If you have a good water source, everything will thrive. If your water source starts failing, do you think people are going to hang around? Do you think they're going to wash themselves and bathe themselves in water that they can't guarantee is good? Ask me if I drink city water. No. I'd better be dying of a thirst to drink city water. When I make my coffee, it comes in, I buy it from Colligan. Sharp water. I'd rather deal with the microplastics coming from them than trying to understand the amount of calcium and fluoride that they dump into the water. My refrigerator, again, we don't use the water so the water never cycles through my refrigerator. You should see the amount of calcium that builds up inside that refrigerator. Right, I understand [ambulance call] they got to. [ambulance call rings again] They have to put the fluoride in the different things in the water. It's traversing [ambulance call rings again] in a very long direction. If you don't, bacteria and certain things start forming, the water is going to go bad, okay? It keeps the water fresh for these long distances at this point. It's not good for our bodies though. They're using the body, so you need to install a water filter at your house. That is a very, very expensive thing to do or you need to trust the cheaper ones that screw onto it. And I don't necessarily trust those, you see what I'm getting at. So I just buy water that I know comes from a trusted source that I know is pure and the biggest issue that I have to worry about is the micro plastic that's sitting inside at my house. Whereas when it comes to everything else, I want the water filtered before it goes into my body, not the body doing the filtering. That's just making the body work harder. That's the most prevalent issue in my mind. Right there, the water, city water and sewer and the sewage. And it doesn't necessarily tie into climate change, but I'm sure if you looked at those pipes that have been sitting in that ground for as long as they have, I'm sure that flooding has not helped anything. I know it doesn't help with the sewage, because as soon as we flood, all the sewage gets backed up. Because there's evidently some something's going on. There's a leak somewhere where the seawater's getting into our sewage lines. Because if not, why would it get backed up? That's just, again, I'm not an expert, sewage or pipes or anything like that, that's just my assumption. I don't know what happens when you assume. It makes an ass out of me. Sorry.

Knorr: Is that something that the current mayor is-

Owens: Addressing?

Knorr: Yeah.

Owens: She's trying her hardest, but again, with a town with a limited tax base structure, a limited amount of income that comes period point blank from the state anything, what is she to do? Pipes are the most expensive thing you can do. You gotta have heavy equipment, I'm not talking like, heavy excavators, heavy dump trucks, moving dirt, moving stone, buying the pipe, setting the pipe, I mean you're talking millions. They don't have that kind of money. We don't have that tax base. Do you know the number one tax base in the City of Crisfield? Do you where they live? The condos. Do you know how many of them are registered voters in the City of Crisfield? Not even half, because it's their secondary home. So think about that. The majority of your tax base comes from people that don't live here year-round. You know [ambulance call rings again] majority of people live in this community. The biggest congregation of folks. And the floodplain. And the low-income housing, Somers Cove Apartments, okay? [ambulance call rings again] They should have thought of that. They did not think of that when they built that place. They built low-income housing in one of the lowest areas of Crisfield. So the poorest of the poor, the people that need help to get on their feet, that's the whole idea of assisted living, right? We're trying to get you on your feet, get you going. But you gotta move all your valuables into a floodplain and within six months you could ruin everything that you've ever worked so hard for while you're still paying low-income rent. And again, I don't think people understand low-income rent, I try. If you make \$20,000 a year, your rent is based off that. So if you start doing better, do you understand what I'm saying? Your rent goes like this, through the roof. So if you started out, you've had hard times, whatever. I don't care how you got to where you are, right? Just trying to better yourself. You need a house, you need somewhere to stay, nice safe place, right? You get a job at Rubberset making \$26,000, and then you start climbing the corporate ladder or you start trying, you know. I took this test, I did this, I did this, I did this, I did this, now I'm making \$40,000. Man, I'm gonna start saving up money. I'm going to get a down payment. I'm a see if I can get my credit straight or I'm at least get a rental outside of low-income housing, okay. This is not a diss at all income housing, but we all know what happens is that low-income housing it's a very crime-ridden area, if you drugs you know it's very prevalent in those areas. Some people want to get out of that, it's very hard to get that as you start to make more money, the rent for that same exact place starts going up, so you were just paying two hundred dollars a month rent, you based your budget off that. Now they slapped you with six hundred dollars month rent because you're making more money. I'm the opposite, keep his rent at two hundred, let him save his money, let him go out there and buy a house someday, let that family go get a house. It's going to be more beneficial to this community than it ever will be because he's paying \$600, \$700 right to you. What are you going to make an extra \$4,000 off of him in that year? I promise you, we've lost that money well ahead. I would rather him have that \$4 grand and save it for a down payment to better himself. Does that make sense? So again, that may not have been where you were going with that, but that's kind of the idea, it just. If you have the lowest lying area in your town, harboring the most amount of poor people, if you understand what I'm saying, it's not good. They're never going to get out of it, even if it is government assisted homes. They flood. The first place to flood is right there. And guess who's, you know,

fire department going to save them, that's where we were at the majority of the time, getting people out of the low-income housing to safer areas during the same time. I mean, it's just, why? Because that's the lowest place in town. A lot of them don't have the means to just walk out the door and go. They hop in their vehicle and go, some of them, the only transportation is public transportation. Do you think they were running during hurricane Sandy? No, Again, it's not. I deal with a lot of black and white with my job. If you understand, it's very linear. You get 100 feet; you're getting 100 feet if you understand what I'm saying. A lot of the issues we're talking about, they're not linear. They're not just black and white on paper. It's a multi-faceted approach, it's an algorithm that has moving variables that can change at whim. and a lot of it's what people before us did. And I understand they did what they thought was best, but it's really a hard thing for some people at this time. [pauses]

Golladay: So, you- you mentioned that when it floods like the- the people, in like the low-income housing, all of their belongings are in danger from the floodwaters.

Owens: Absolutely.

Golladay: Yeah. What kind of like damages have you experienced from like flooding?

Owens: Me personally?

Golladay: Yeah. Or like the family.

Owens: My grandmother lived in a low area, but her house was designed. The builder of her house knew that the area that he was building the house flooded. So she has a basement, if you understand. So her basement would flood all the time. But how did she prepare for that? She kept nothing on the bottom foot of the whole basement. And then if a hurricane was coming, she'd go down there and give it a good walkover. I don't have anything down here below three feet where the water could come up and ruin it. It's flooded her car out. She lost a car during Sandy, but I think a lot of people did in that area. And again, she was 70 years old. I just told her, I said, "Your house is not going anywhere." I said, "You may lose electric." She said, "Well, I got a fireplace. I know how to start a fire." She said, "I don't know how cook on one if I got too." I was like, "Well, you're good." I said "Cause once it starts flooding, I can't get to you." And she was fine. She weathered it out and it ruined her car. But, she was fortunate, she had insurance. She got a new car, not new, but you know what I mean. So yeah, that's really it. My family does not live per se in the low-lying areas of town. We all live on kind of the outskirts of town. So it's kind of the higher areas.

Knorr: Speaking about kind of the younger generation, and you were talking about the youth infusion and everything, would you- would you mind talking about telling us about raising your kids here in Crisfield? Is it similar to, I know you said technology is definitely more prevalent now?

Owens: Yeah.

Knorr: But do you still kind of want that same experience that you had?

Owens: Yes, that's what we've, absolutely try but I do not think that my childhood and their childhood will be anything alike. I believe for the most that they'll experience all the water activities if they want to, if they love, which it seems that they do love the water. That's a very prevalent thing. Swimming, we've already started swimming lessons, things like that. They both know how to float already. I have a three-year-old and a two-year-old, it's just the doggie paddling and getting that going. So that is a very big aspect. My kids will not ride their bike around Crisfield by themselves. It's not that I believe anybody would do anything to harm them, I believe that people have become clueless to their surroundings. I believe that situational awareness has eluded many, many people, whether it's technology distractions, whatever. But I've seen too many times where people get hit from someone not paying attention to what they're doing. For me to allow my child to go into those crosshairs with, if you understand where I'm getting at, like riding their bike down the strip. When I was riding the bike, there was no cell phones. Nobody was watching YouTube while they were driving down the road. They were, I mean, yeah, I guess they could have been reading the paper when they were going, but a cell phone back then was the 18-inch-long thing. You had to flip it open and hit the buttons, and then pull the antenna out, and you know, you talked on it like it was a- a bigger phone, and so people didn't use, if they used their cell phone, back then, they pulled over. And they literally pulled the phone out, because you couldn't drive with this ginormous phone. We had a satellite phone was the first one that we had. It sat in a bag in the back of the car. I'll never forget it, but so now, certain things will change, you know, just simply because I believe the world changes. It's not that it's, I feel Crisfield's any unsafe, it's just I feel that people are more reckless. They don't pay attention now. It's a very technologically distracted world. Driving down the road, it's not the- not the same as it was. And to be ignorant of that and just send my kids out there when they're eight, nine years old, that's, that's. I don't think that they're going to be as alert as I was at eight or nine years old either, and that's the other thing. Experience. Change of, the definition of learning is a change in behavior as a result of experience, right? My experience was that I could go out into the world like that and experience those things. Theirs isn't. They're going have a different learning so, but they'll still- they'll still have a lot of the core things. They have the Crab Derby, they'll be on the water a lot, but yeah.

Knorr: Yeah, you'd hope that they still have that connection that you share and feel with Crisfield.

Owens: Exactly.

Knorr: That never kind of changes.

Owens: And I think they will. I think they will. They- they love the outdoors. They love being outside. It's their favorite thing to do. So I don't- I don't see them not enjoying all that Crisfield has to offer outside.

Golladay: Do you think there's still that community connection, like the- the ability to walk into Gordon's-

Owens: Absolutely.

Golladay: -with 5 bucks.

Owens: Absolutely. If my kid went in there with three dollars, somebody would step up. You know what I'm saying? Or the owner would do it, and then he'd just call me later. "Hey Bryant, I don't like doing this. Your kid came in here with three dollars. I fed him." You know what I mean? "I'll swing down there and give you, you know, whatever. I'll pay you back, you know?" And that's, go do that in Salisbury. You know? I mean, go up to, don't get me wrong, people have good hearts. I'm not saying that. But it would be the employee would have to do it themselves. You see where I'm getting at? They would have put their dollar up. Whereas here it would be, we're not worried about the dollars, just get some food. You know what I mean? It's different, it's very different. And I understand it's different worlds, but everybody down here knows pretty much everybody. So it's not the same. Whereas you get into a city like Salisbury with 60, 70, 80,000 people, you can ride around all week and not see the same person. Here, when I leave here, my best friend, the best man of my wedding, that's his family business right back there, you know what I mean. I can see the best man in my wedding as soon as I walk out the door. It's not gonna be the same, so it's hard to explain, but that's it. It's a very community-oriented place and everybody just knows everybody. So it's harder to, your kid could go out and someone would tell you if they're doing something. "Hey, I saw your kid at this game. He was acting a fool up in those stands. You need to talk to him." "Thank you. Thanks for telling me, cause we don't allow that in our household." You see where I'm getting at? And that's just how you raise your kids and what you believe in, I believe.

Knorr: Would you still recommend Crisfield as an area to live?

Owens: Absolutely. To raise a family is the number one place I would recommend. Yep, the downfall, I would say, to Crisfield for a family is, lack of modern amenities, call it lack of a better term. You know what I mean? There's health facilities now. We got a new primary care physician in town. There's medicine. You can go get almost any prescription you want filled. But food options, you don't have a lot there, okay? A lot of the community complains about that, right? A lot the community doesn't do basic math in their head. They just like to complain. It's like you have 2,400 people that live in this town. Let's say, how many of those need to go out to eat every night to sustain a business that comes in? How many people do you need to bring in from outside of town to sustain the business? And if you have five businesses in town that all

buy from Cisco and they all sell the exact same food, you're not really signaling yourself out for us to be like, "Man, go to that place, they are amazing. You won't find food anywhere else." No, you can find it at any of the other five restaurants in Crisfield. They just cook it with different oil. Do you see where I'm getting at? But at the same point in time, people are like, "Man, I'd love Dunkin' Donuts." How could, how I'd love to sit in at that board meeting when whatever person walks in and pitches the idea of a Dunkin' Donuts in Crisfield and he gets to the numbers portion of it. And he says, "Yeah, we'll operate at a thousand-dollar loss every day just for the electric. Because we're not going to serve but about 150 coffees a day." You see where I'm getting at? And people are, "Oh, I love that." Are you going to go there every day? Are you going to dump \$4 to \$5 into that business every day? I'm not. Dunkin' is a splurge item to me now. The economy is tough. I have two kids. My wife is a stay-at-home mom. She's a real estate agent, but the real estate economy is so bad, she hasn't sold a house since December, so I'm a one-income family. I'm not gonna, I do math all the time in my head. If I buy Dunkin' Donuts, \$4 three times a week, that's \$12. 12 times 4. \$60 or you know \$48 a month or \$58 a month, or no \$48, \$48 a month. 48 times 12, that's almost \$600 a year that I'm giving to Dunkin' Donuts for bean water and a donut that isn't good for my body, you see. So, I'm not doing anything to help myself, just helping a Dunkin' and the economy. I'm sorry. I've got to think about numero uno right now. I mean, it's tough times out here. So, people don't think about that, they don't think about how they're going to support this. They just wanted to come here, but they don't understand the logistics of supporting the numbers of it. There's been a restaurant down at the end at Waters Edge Cafe. It's been different restaurant every three months. Everybody just keeps trying their hand at it. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. They don't change it. They don't change anything. Same food, same, just different names, different names same food, different names the same food. And it's like, same food's already here. You're not doing anything to single yourself out. Not only that, even if you did single yourself out, could you afford to operate down here with the limited income that Crisfield has? Or are you catering to a different market? And then you've got to convince them to drive to Crisfield for a meal with nothing else to do after you have the meal. So that's the whole point of the trip. There's no bars, there's no, I'm not saying bars are the key, I am not saying that at all. But if I drive to Ocean City with my wife and we go to the Shark, which is a very nice restaurant in West Ocean City, I wanna drink after I have that meal. I'm gonna go have a bourbon somewhere or, you know, something like that. I can throw a dart in the air, and it's gonna land on a bar that is of decent quality that I can go sit to and have a conversation with my wife with other adults around and have decent drink. You can't in Crisfield. You can either go to the American Legion or the Elks. So if you're not a member of those and you come into town, where are you going? We have one place over here that serves alcohol, but that's it. One place. So if have one bad meal experience there, you're going back. So it's just, and I'm not saying their food's bad or anything like that, but everybody has different experiences at restaurants. I mean, you go to same restaurant three times and you love it all three and I could like it too and not like it the last time I

go. It's all about perception and opinion, and it's tough when you have a limited market and a limited number of people feeding into that. That's yeah, so it's tough.

Golladay: Is there anything you think the city can do to try to keep younger people around?

Owens: No more than what they're doing. I mean, the only way you would do that is you need to roll back taxes on any type of development that comes in so, and the city can't do that. They need every tax dollar they can get, if you understand what I'm saying. So where- where am I going with this? You need to create an avenue for the youth that are graduating to have jobs as soon as they graduate. If they're not going to the army or the military and they're not geared towards college, we have no avenue for them to go. You know, if you look at other communities like Salisbury, there's a plethora of manufacturing jobs around there that you could go and get an entry-level job at to figure your life out. You work there for three or four years and say, "Hey, this ain't for me, I'm going to go do something else. Electrician! You know what, I've worked for four years, I am going to go to Lineman School and see if I can be an electrician," or "I'm gonna be a master plumber now." "I like diesel mechanics school." "I'm going to college. The hell with this working shit. I'm going to college now. I am going to go work with my brain and not do this. I want to be a social worker." I don't know. You don't even have that Rubberset set, right? It's harder to get a job at Rubberset than it is anywhere because I don't, I'm not, I'm not trying, to be honest. Drug test. Half of America still requires THC on a drug test and I can drive to the store and buy it right now, but I can't apply for a job making paint brushes because I ate an edible last night at 12 o'clock to help me sleep. Do you see where I'm getting at? But it's completely legal. Do we do that with alcoholics? Do we?

Golladay: I don't think so.

Owens: No, not at all. You see where I'm getting at? We have a strong workforce in the low-income housing, all piss-dirty, for a THC. Guarantee you! Do I care? No! I don't care. I don't care at all! But Rubberset does because it's a safety-sensitive job and we don't know if you're high or not when you come into work. How do you know if I'm drunk? How do I know if- if I weren't up until 3 in the morning pounding vodka? Granted, I guess I could smell like it, or my eyes could be bloodshot. Blah blah blah blah. Do you see where I'm getting at? And it's just, so you bring in more manufacturing jobs. Let's say we bring in another manufacturing company, let's, they make engine parts, they're on machinery, grinding out, let's just go with Dart. Dart makes solo cups, okay, or whatever. Dart's in Cambridge. Dart says, "You know what Crisfield's a good working force for us. We can run a container ship right up into Crisfield, all flow to the container ship," which you can't do, we don't have the docks for it. "But then we can run the plastic right up to the, or the plastic materials right up the plant, they can mix it, make it, we'll ship the cup right out of Crisfield." Right? Where's the workforce gonna go? We just had the exact same conversation. If Rubberset can't fill them, the next manufacturing company is not going to do it. You think they don't talk to each other? You think the next manufacturer company

didn't call the biggest manufacturing company and Crisfield would say, "Hey, what's your workforce employment like? How do you employ people? Where do they come from?" It's like, "Oh man, half my guys drive down 413 every day. They live in Princess Anne, Pocomoke, Salisbury. I got guys coming from Seaford." You see- you see where I'm getting at? And it's like why? Because everybody down here pisses dirty. See where I'm getting at? Well, it's legal. If they drive to the store, they can walk in there and buy it. But yet you, you penalize them for it. They can't go get a basic job because of THC in their blood. I'm not- I'm not saying it's the entire case, but I can tell you it's a big one for just manufacturing jobs, safety-sensitive jobs. You see where I am getting at? So it's just, you box off your employees. You box off the people that are living in this town that could go to work for you. The seafood industry is the most dangerous industry in this town. Don't- don't please don't put that, but what I'm getting at is you can get hurt the most at it. You think they drug test? No, because they wouldn't have a workforce if they did. See what I'm saying? It's like, again, OSHA. Imagine if we've employed OSHA standards down here in the seafood industry. You wouldn't have them. That one soft crab would be like \$12 for one crab instead of getting 10 for 12. You see where I'm getting at? Who's buying them then? Nobody, nobody buys them. And it's like I understand the purpose of OSHA, OSHA has good to it, see where I'm getting at? Where's the middle? So that's the idea. I understand why they want drug screening at safety-sensitive work sites. I'm in construction. All of my guys go get drug screening. You see where I am getting at? But my guys are also, we go into NASA and Wallops and things like that. It's not me requiring it. It's them. They're telling me I got to do it and I want the money from them. Do you see where I'm getting it? So that's why I do it. But you know it- it's, do we require it when you first come in? Pre-employment for DOT, it's a DOT thing. It's not anything we do. That's it. Then after that, you can go eat all the edibles, smoke all the pot you want, you know what I mean? You don't get hurt, you don't, it- it just, there's a big disconnect there. But it's gonna change, I think, as our generation grows up. I don't know how your all's beliefs are on THC, but I could care less. Care less of what you do in your own private time. I trust. I trust someone who I know is on THC more than I do someone on alcohol. You make more rash decisions when you're drinking alcohol than you do when you are stoned. What's the biggest decision you make when you're stoned? Where you're going to go get your bag of chips from? You know what I mean? Or whatever. I don't know. I mean whatever they may. I've been drunk plenty of times. I had some crazy thoughts go through my head of fun activities. You see where I'm getting at? And they were not good activities. You shouldn't have been doing them. They were reckless. Someone could've got hurt, you know? We live in a rural area, foilers, boats, you see where I'm getting at? You just make bad decisions. That's like, I don't know, anyway, different topic, different conversation. That is why I believe the workforce is so slow. You have a very strong workforce in the area. But, again, they can't employ them.

Knorr: Kind of the last question I have, but I don't know about you, John, but what kind of wisdom would you kind of share with the future generation for Crisfield and everything?

Owens: The grass is green where you water it. If you want to make grass grow in other places, by all means go water it in those places. But if you sit there and you complain about how Crisfield has nothing, or Crisfield has done nothing for you, and in the moment that you have the ability to bring something to Crisfield, and you cut, tail, and run, and you go, I'm not faulting again. I want you to follow your dreams, that's where you want go. But if you go for the path that seems easier, that's what you'll get. I'm not choosing that, I'm staying. I'm a commercial pilot, I have 3,000 hours in the sky. I can go work for any airline that I want at any point in time. And I'm here. Because I love my family. And I understand that your time here on this earth is very, very limited, okay? Do I want to fly around, spend six to eight months of my life out of a suitcase with a bunch of souls that could care less if I'm alive or dead, as long as I can take that airplane off and land it, and get them to their destination on time? No, that's not- that's not my values, it's other people's values, but my values are, I want- I want- I want this place to thrive. I don't want it to dwindle into the bay, if you understand what I'm saying. And if you don't make changes, and if you don't try and inject people like me into this community to try and help and stay, it's gonna happen. And it- it might be too late; it might already be too late. But that's my theory.

Owens: And so, if there's, just to wrap up, there's anything about Crisfield we haven't talked about that you want to, everyone in the future to who's looking in our library archive, anything you want them to know about Crisfield that we haven't talked about, now's your chance.

Owens: It's a very historical place. It has a lot of history, it's one of the- John Smith saw this piece of land on his second voyage over to America. It's- it's, you know, one of the first places that was settled in the 1600s as the colonists were starting to make their trips over. They had read about this and the area that it was. They read about Smith Island. That's where John Smith found Tangier and Smith Island and he circled around those islands and saw the shore back over here. It's just, it's rich in history. It's- it's beautiful. I don't know that- that's what you're looking for.

Golladay: Anything you think is important.

Owens: It's- I don't know how to answer that question correctly, anything that I think is important about Crisfield. It needs all the help it can get, that's probably it. It's a beautiful town with a lot of rich history, a lot good history. And it's gonna dwindle away to nothing if people don't start paying attention and helping. Like, Jeyna. You met Jeyna, for example. Jeyna left. Jeyna moved out of Crisfield. She lived in Salisbury. Right on Riverside Drive, beautiful home. Jeyna moved back. Why? She's trying to make it better. She wants to continue her family's legacy in Crisfield, which is a very good legacy. That Tawes last name's a big deal down here, her. She's a Grant now. She married, obviously, but her dad was Jay Tawes. She was Jeyna Tawes. And that last name has done tremendous things for Crisfield. They always have and Jeyna has just stepped right into that role. She, any community event you ask for, she's there. And again, that's- that's what Crisfield was missing, was someone. Jeyna left Crisfield, but lived

in Salisbury, she still worked down here, if you understand, which is getting a rarity. But where was her tax base at? Salisbury, where's her tax dollar go? Where were her kids spending their activities, interjecting the money and different things like that? Salisbury. Salisbury's fine, they don't need Jeyna. Crisfield didn't really use Jeyna, you see where I'm getting at? That's- that's kind of the thing, and it's- that's it, that's what's important to me, is seeing this town flourish and thrive, and it's going to take more people, more youth, not the boomers that are retiring and looking to just sail off into the sunset. You know what I mean? And that's where we're getting the majority of and that's not a diss to the boomers. If I was a boomer? Again, that sunset you can never find. I'm serious, if you guys ever get a chance, come down here, look up the sunset time, check the sky, make sure it's clear and then come down here. You will not be disappointed. Come right down here to the depot, right down here to the dock and just stare out there. It's beautiful. It is one of the most beautiful pictures you'll ever seen in your life. You can't get it anywhere else except California, Oregon, and Washington. And, that's 3,000 miles. So anyway, I'm sorry if I've rambled off topic and got you in different areas and different things like that. I appreciate what you guys are doing, trying to gain knowledge about it. Crisfield does suffer from climate change, erosion, different things like that that's very prevalent in our lives. So, if you talk to someone from the right, they'll tell you climate change is crazy. If you talk someone from left, they tell you it's all climate change and erosion has nothing to do with it. I'm telling you, it's a nice mixture of both. It's how we manage and maintain our infrastructure up here. A good map of Crisfield. I don't know if you've seen the aerials. But I mean, look at those. Look at what we're surrounded by. That's all marsh. That's all marsh, that's all marsh, that's all a marsh, that's all marsh, right? Where, so if we flood, where does the water go? And you can see previous generations, back in the day, they used to try and cut ditches. You see that, see that big ditch right there? These are all man-made ditches, those aren't, those are curved out. You see the nice straight one? That's a man-made ditch. Why? Flooding. They were trying to give the water somewhere else to escape. What do you do as the water level rises, if low tide now is a foot and a half, if so if low tide on that you know, for example if we get a solid rain and the day before low tide was here the water basin is here so the Chesapeake Bay is sitting here, we get two and a half, three inches of rain, see where I'm getting at? Where's the water gonna drain to if it's be-, if it's higher than the sea level? And if the sea levels rising, it's keeping, you see where I am getting at, you're fighting a losing battle, but cutting the ditches, things like that could help. But at the same point in time, who's got the money for it? The State of Maryland is running a \$3 billion deficit. It's going to go higher. I heard it's gonna be \$5 billion by July 1. They're not going to fork out money to save Crisfield from flooding when they can't even funnel money into Dorchester County schools. They're axing every summer program they have. Or they're going to have to pay for it out of their own pocket because the State of Maryland has no money. Fruitland Primary School, they had to deal with the state to finish up a primary school. The state owes them like \$3 million because they don't have it. First things that get hit or those types of projects in the schools because you have to keep the infrastructure going, you have to keep government working and employed, and that's your biggest budget. So, I don't know. I don't know what the

solution is. We're living in a- an interesting time for the State of Maryland. I don't know what you all plan to do after college or where you want to move or things like that, but it's going to get interesting here. Very much so. Anything else?

Golladay: I don't think so. I think that's all of it.

Owens: Good, good.

Golladay: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today. We'll go and send you the transcripts later.

Owens: Thank you. I appreciate it.

[Transcript ends]